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978-0-521-69423-0 - Core Topics in Operating Department Practice: Anaesthesia and Critical Care

Brian Smith, Paul Rawling, Paul Wicker and Chris Jones

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Core Topics in Operating Department Practice

Anaesthesia and Critical Care

Recent developments to medical career structures and roles and responsibilities have raised the profile of operating department practitioners (ODPs). Required knowledge is vast, and exams must be sat in working towards statutory registration. This is the first in a series of three books providing comprehensive information for health-care staff working in the operating department. Topics include anaesthesia, critical care, post-interventional care, enhancing care delivery, professional practice, leadership and resource management. The clear and concise format is ideally suited to study and qualification as well as continued reference during practice. Written by specialists with a wealth of knowledge and experience to offer, and incorporating problem-based learning from case studies, this book will be important for ODPs and theatre nurses throughout the UK, in Australia where the same structures have been adopted, and worldwide for all professionals working in operating departments.

Brian Smith is Senior Lecturer in Continuing Professional Development at Edge Hill University, Liverpool.

Paul Rawling is Senior Lecturer in Operating Department Practice at Edge Hill University, Liverpool.

Paul Wicker is Head of Operating Department Practice Programmes at Edge Hill University, Liverpool.

Chris Jones is Senior Lecturer in Continuing Professional Development at Edge Hill University, Liverpool.

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Contributors

Toni Bewley

Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust and
Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Mark Bottell

St. Helens & Knowsley Hospital Trust
Whiston Hospital
Prescot, Merseyside

Robert Campbell

Liverpool Women's Hospital
Liverpool

Trish Finn

Aintree Cardiac Centre
University Hospital Aintree
Liverpool

Gill Hall

Respiratory Education UK
Liverpool

Teresa Hardcastle

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Kevin Anthony Henshaw

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

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x **Contributors**

Chris Jones

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Helen McNeill

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Martin Maguire

University Hospital Aintree
Liverpool

Jill Nolan

Intensive Care Unit
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen Hospital
Liverpool

Maria Parsonage

Wirral Hospitals NHS Trust
Merseyside

Paul Rawling

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Michael A. Sewell

Burnley General Hospital
Burnley

Brian Smith

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Cheryl Wayne-Conroy

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Paul Wicker

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Tom Williams

Independent Academic Adviser
Alicante

Margaret Woods

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

Stephen L. Wordsworth

Division of Operating Department Practice
Faculty of Health
The University of Central England
Birmingham

Norman Wright

Faculty of Health
Edge Hill University
Liverpool

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Foreword

Most senior consultant anaesthetists will be able to recall times during their early careers when anaesthetic assistance in theatre could be described at best as rudimentary. There was often willing help for the anaesthetists but it was provided largely by those whose training, through no fault of their own, was negligible. It is true, of course, that the early anaesthetic assistants did not have to contend with the complex range of anaesthetic equipment that is now available, and it comes as a surprise to many, for instance, to learn that the use of pulse oximetry did not become routine in the operating theatre until the late 1980s. That chapters in this book include accounts of topics such as perioperative myocardial infarction, mechanical ventilation and awareness during anaesthesia indicates just how much progress has been made since those often unsatisfactory times. Further chapters on the development of a personal portfolio and on the implications of professional accountability also serve notice that the era of the Anaesthetic Practitioner is nigh: an era that the ODAs of twenty-five years ago could never have envisaged. The modern reality, finally, is that the theatre orderly of two or more decades ago is now a degree student, ODP, of whom is required an understanding of the basic sciences which underpin the safe practice of sophisticated modern anaesthesia. This book is the first of a series which should go much of the way towards fulfilling that ambition.

Dr. Simon Bricker
Consultant Anaesthetist
The Countess of Chester Hospital

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Preface

Healthcare in the UK has experienced intense change over the past few years, much of which has been focused on the perioperative environment. The NHS Plan, introduced by the Labour government in 2000, was at the forefront of the modernisation of the UK's National Health Service. Focusing on major areas of concern, such as modernisation of the workforce, increasing patient choice, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of patient care, the government strategy to rebuild the NHS has affected every segment of the care sector.

Perioperative practitioners have responded to these pressures by re-examining professional boundaries and roles within perioperative care. As practice has advanced to meet these new challenges, new roles have developed, including for example, the surgical care practitioner, anaesthesia practitioner, and non-medical prescribing practitioners. These roles have the potential to increase the quality of patient care, as well as offering an opportunity for perioperative practitioners to extend their skills, knowledge, and competencies.

The intention is to provide a series of books exploring all aspects of core practice in perioperative care. This book, the first of the series, focuses on developments in anaesthetic practice.

For many anaesthetic practitioners¹ the thought of further professional development can be

¹ The term 'anaesthetic practitioner' depicts the role of either an operating department practitioner or a nurse acting as assistant to the anaesthetist.

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daunting. The increasingly specialist area of anaesthetic practice has been mirrored by an increasing need for specialist knowledge. Consider, for example, the differing needs of a patient undergoing major vascular surgery, an elderly patient requiring hip arthroplasty and a young mother undergoing caesarean section under spinal anaesthesia. The advanced anaesthetic techniques available in a modern operating department mean that care for these groups of patients is vastly different.

The purpose of this book is therefore to support anaesthetic practitioners in the crucial process of professional development.

Key learning points are included at the beginning of each chapter to focus the reader on the main topics discussed. The editors have developed the content of this book to reflect current concerns in anaesthetic practice. The book does not try to cover the vast area of anaesthetic practice, instead it focuses on areas of concern where practitioners are developing new roles. The reader should draw on this publication as a key resource for contemporary practice and use it where fitting to apply theory into practice.

The book commences with introductory chapters looking at the advancing role of the anaesthetic practitioner and risk assessment in the anaesthetic environment. Risk assessment is seen as a core area of concern for anaesthetic practitioners because

of the high-risk environment where they deliver patient care.

The book continues by exploring core areas of developing practice, such as electrocardiogram monitoring, applying cricoid pressure, breathing systems, preventing awareness under anaesthesia and developments in resuscitation. The chapters offer knowledge and understanding of key clinical issues which affect practitioners' practice.

Later chapters of the book look at issues in advanced anaesthetic practice, for example, managing difficult intubations, understanding total intravenous anaesthesia and infusion pumps and anaesthesia for patients undergoing electroconvulsive therapy.

The last two chapters of the book explore professional anaesthetic practice in relation to continual professional development – accountability and learning from practice through reflection and portfolio development.

It is at this point of great changes in anaesthetic practice that we offer this textbook, developed by specialists, to support the ongoing professional development of the anaesthetic practitioner.

**Brian Smith, Paul Rawling,
Paul Wicker, Chris Jones**
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